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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 002451

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS, LONDON FOR POL/GURNEY, DS/DSS/ITA,
DS/IP/SA, NSC FOR MILLARD

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: ATTACKS AGAINST UK-AFFILIATED DEVELOPMENT

REF: A. A. KATHMANDU 2383

[B. B. KATHMANDU 2246](#)

[C. C. KATHMANDU 2332](#)

Classified By: DCM Robert K. Boggs for reasons 1.5 (B,D)

[11.](#) (SBU) Summary. Nepal's Maoists torched two British Department for International Development (DFID) project vehicles that were parked in a forestry department compound in Butwal, Rupendehi District on 14 December, the day prior to a Maoist called strike ("bandh") in the district. In addition to this incident, two local employees working on a DFID funded project in Dailekh District have been murdered by the Maoists in separate incidents. These incidents raise questions about the continued feasibility of foreign-supported activities in a number of districts. End Summary.

[12.](#) (C) On December 14 at approximately 1800 hours (local time), the Maoists torched two British Department for International Development (DFID) project vehicles that were parked in a forestry department compound in Butwal, Rupendehi District in Nepal's southern lowlands. Dan Huntington, DFID's in-country security chief, told Econoff on 16 December that DFID did not believe that the attack was directed against DFID or development work in the district. Rather, the attack was meant to intimidate locals into adhering to the Maoist-called strike ("bandh"), which started 15 December. (FYI. This interpretation squares with past patterns of violence during the lead-up to Maoist-enforced bandhs. End FYI.)

[13.](#) (C) Although Huntington rationalized that the attacks were not directed at DFID's work because the two vehicles were unmarked, both vehicles did bear blue (diplomatic) plates which identified them as British affiliated.

[14.](#) (C) On November 30, the Maoists reportedly gunned down a female Nepali staff member of a local NGO associated with the World Food Program (WFP), German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) and DFID in the western district of Dailekh on charges of being a spy for the government (reftel). Huntington shared DFID's investigation results on the murder, indicating that DFID believes that the Maoists killed the woman because of her alleged love affair with an Army soldier. Huntington again stressed that the murder was not directed against DFID or development work in the district.

[15.](#) (C) Huntington disclosed that DFID had learned on 16 December that another female Nepali staff member of a local NGO associated with Helvetas (a Swiss development agency) and DFID was killed in Dailekh District. (Note: According to Huntington, Helvetas' activities in Dailekh are funded by DFID. End Note.) It is believed that she was murdered by the Maoists on charges of being a spy for the government. DFID plans to hold a security meeting this week to discuss the implications for development work in the district that these murders occurred. Again, Huntington contended that this attack was not directed against DFID or development work in the district.

[16.](#) (C) Comment. The geographic distribution of these incidents appears to reinforce our perception that Maoist intimidation and associated crimes vary from district to district, apparently depending on the attitudes of the local leadership and the relative visibility of foreign-supported activities. Rupendehi is the district where a group of Peace Corps trainees was threatened (ref B) and a Coca-Cola sales distributor was threatened and a distribution van was recently torched (ref C). In Dailekh District, USAID attempted to launch a program focused on the sustainable production of forest and high-value agricultural products. However, when staff for the project made a site visit in July 2003 (during the cease-fire), the Maoists threatened the group and indicated that prior to working on any project in the district the work plan and budget had to be approved by the local Maoist Commander. The Maoist also demanded that the project would have to pay 2-3 percent of its budget to the local Maoist fund, which was, of course, unacceptable. There are currently no Peace Corps volunteers in Rupandehi or Dailekh Districts and only a limited USAID-funded health project in Dailekh.

17. (C) Comment continued. Huntington's assessment that none of these acts of terror were specifically directed against DFID may be accurate, but that may be increasingly beside the point. The real question is whether Maoist terror, regardless of its targets, will undermine donors' ability to provide development assistance to those who need it most. End Comment.
MALINOWSKI